

## Pachkovsky, Alex

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**From:** Patricia Magaldi <magaldipat@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 22, 2013 9:30 PM  
**To:** Jud Testimony  
**Subject:** An RN weighs in on the assisted suicide bill

Twenty-five years ago I needed to relocate to New Jersey due to my husband's job. I got a job at a large hospital in northern New Jersey well known for its burn unit, the place I was most often assigned in my role as a critical care float nurse. It was there that I came to understand the immense physical suffering that human sometimes find themselves faced with. We did our best to ease their pain, often giving heavy doses of narcotics, much more than in any other unit I had ever worked. Among the group of nurses who started orientation at the same time as me was a new graduate nurse by the name of Charlie. During lunch breaks I discovered that Charlie had spent time as a Navy man on a nuclear sub before he decided to become a nurse. I left that position after working there a year in order to move back to CT with my husband. New Jersey became a memory. Until a morning 15 years later when I caught sight of a chilling headline in the newspaper about a nurse who had been charged with multiple murders. I barely skimmed the article as I was in the middle of chores. A few minutes later I felt a nagging urge to re-check the article: "What was that guy's name again?" I hurried downstairs and was horrified as I realized that the man charged with multiple murders was none other than Charlie, the nurse who I had worked with in the burn unit. He admitted to killing at least 40 patients, beginning at the burn unit where he had begun his nursing career. In the questioning process it was revealed that Charlie believed he was helping the people by releasing them from their agony or from what looked to be a life without meaning.

Often I have been haunted by the deeds done by my co-worker Charlie. In fact I remember a couple of times coming on to the unit after being off for a day or two and asking where's Mr. So-and So," only to be informed that he had died. And being very surprised. The irony of Charlie's arrest has not been lost on me: in 1994 assisted suicide was legalized in Oregon. In 2008 Washington state. I've often thought to myself, "what makes Charlie so different from those who purport to be acting in a patients best interest and who so blithely help them to take their own lives? As soon as we decide that there is not clear moral obligation to preserve life, it becomes a guessing game, dependent on each individual's reasoning and conscience as to who lives and who dies. This cannot happen here in Connecticut. What makes this law particularly scary is that it requires no oversight or second opinions. Imagine a physician who thinks like Charles Cullen did. Never did I imagine that I was working beside a serial killer - he was a decent and friendly fellow.

The Hippocratic oath has all but been discarded in our progressive age. How can we ever regain the trust that we used to have in our healthcare providers if we do not retain the most basic requirement: do no harm?

Please do not let a sense of false compassion move you to support this dangerous law.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Magaldi RN  
Litchfield